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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 DJIBOUTI 000661

SIPDIS
DEPARTMENT FOR DS/IP/AF, DS/IP/ITA, AF/E, AND CA/OCS/ACS/AF

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2019/06/10

TAGS: ASEC MASS PINS PTER CASC DJ ER SO

SUBJECT: DJIBOUTIAN POLICE REQUEST USG ASSISTANCE TO IDENTIFY
GRENADES

CLASSIFIED BY: Ellen Tannor, RSO, U.S. Department of State, U.S.
Embassy, Djibouti; REASON: 1.4(B), (D)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. Following several recent grenade incidents in Djibouti City, the National Police requested Embassy assistance in working with the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) to identify the origins of recovered grenade fragments. Djiboutian police ascribe the recent incidents to Eritrean efforts to destabilize Djibouti. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) In a June 9 meeting with RSO and FSNI, National Police Director of Public Security, Col. Omar Hassan--accompanied by Chief of National Police Col. Abdillahi Abdi, and Deputy Director of National Police Mohamed Ahmed Adlaho, and Col. Omar Hassan, Director of Public Security--requested USG assistance in identifying the origins of two grenades and which country purchased them. The two grenades exploded the evening of June 3 in the Balbala district of the capital (approximately 10 miles from downtown). The police specifically requested U.S. military assistance from CJTF-HOA in determining the grenades' origin. Police gave RSO a fragment of one grenade which appeared to have a serial number and manufacturing date. RSO has shared information with relevant authorities at CJTF-HOA.

¶3. (C) The following serial numbers appear on the fragment:

FG-M 102-66

8-02-79

FG-M 16 87

8-02-79

¶4. (SBU) Grenade attacks remain relatively uncommon in Djibouti. However, this marks the fourth such grenade incident in the capital since March 2009. The grenade incidents are as follows:

-- March 4, 2009: at approximately 7:40PM, an unknown assailant threw a hand grenade into the Nouga-Prix supermarket, commonly frequented by both Djiboutians and Westerners. The explosion damaged the office of the General Manager, and a bystander near the

store suffered minor injuries.

-- March 8, 2009: the night of Prophet Mohamed's birthday, an unknown assailant threw a grenade into the Gendarme Brigade of Cheik Moussa, in the Balbala district. There were no reported injuries.

-- April 12, 2009: at approximately 2PM, an unexploded grenade was found in a tree at the backside of the People's Palace in Djibouti City, a government building frequently used for ceremonial events as well as parliamentary meetings.

-- June 3, 2009: at approximately 8:50PM, two grenades exploded on Arta Road, a heavily traveled trucking route in the Balbala district. The explosion occurred near a passing Ethiopian truck transporting harvest chemicals. A bus behind the truck sustained damage on the front windshield; however, there were no injuries. Police reported a former member of the Djiboutian military was seen removing the pin from the scene. Police noted the grenade was the same type used in the March 8 and April 12 incidents.

¶5. (C) According to the Chief of Police, the perpetrators of these acts are not Djiboutian; he strongly asserts these are direct acts from the Government of Eritrea (GSE) to destabilize Djibouti.

DJIBOUTI 00000661 002 OF 002

According to Abdillahi, the GSE is sending Afar rebels of Ethiopian origin and Somalis to infiltrate the local population. He claimed the infiltrators are receiving financial and logistical support directly from President Isaias Afwerki in order to cause havoc and instability in Djibouti. The Chief further stated he was directed by Djiboutian President Ismail Omar Guelleh "to get to the bottom of these grenade incidents". Abdillahi made a plea for assistance with this issue and highlighted security concerns about Loyada--the primary border crossing point between Djibouti and northwestern Somalia (Somaliland), which he feels is porous and where perpetrators are entering. Abdillahi further reiterated that Loyada is less than 15 kilometers from Camp Lemonier (the only U.S. military base in Africa), and therefore securing it should be the highest priority for both Djibouti and the U.S. Government.

¶6. (SBU) Point of contact for this report is Regional Security Officer Ellen Tannor, tannore@state.gov, Phone (253) 353-995 ext.

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